

# Friends of Bookham Commons Newsletter

Supporting The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, Registered Charity No. 205846



## March 2009

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*Friends of Bookham Commons supporting The National Trust*

Chairman:  
Mr Peter Corliss  
Flat 20  
Harroway Manor  
1 Cobham Road  
Fetcham KT22 9LL

Secretary:  
Mrs Barbara Rombach  
9 Vicarage Close,  
Great Bookham  
KT23 3DZ



Wren

*Troglodytes troglodytes*

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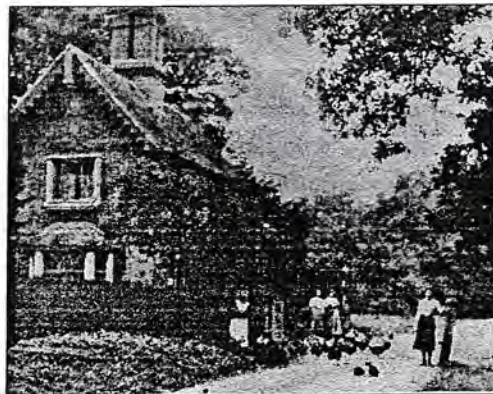
## Things are looking-up...!

Life has its "ups and downs" ... The year 2008 has been one of further progress in our efforts to keep Bookham Commons interesting for people and wildlife ... the wildlife numbers are definitely down, following a second, relatively cold, wet summer. On the "up" side of things, it was good to see so many people enjoying the commons, particularly over the Christmas break.

### Recent progress

Former glades have been restored, veteran trees are being gently rescued, well-formed young oaks encouraged and tree safety work completed. The balance of scrub versus grassland is being carefully attended-to, previous clearings have been a riot of wild flowers, the Hollows Ponds made accessible by our "Friends" Working Party Volunteers, the Eastern ponds surveyed (prior to major works!), new oak benches constructed and

*Quieter times! – the Mark Oak gate house on the Cobham Road, c.1900.*



new information panels provided for the car parks.

The manorial strips of common leading from the villages (on Church Road and Little Bookham Street) were cut regularly, though it was difficult to keep-up with the rate of growth in such a wet summer! Several of the trees near busy paths or overhanging neighbouring property are getting attention from the tree surgeons where the risk to people is too great. Young trees, set further back, are being selected as replacements.

Some of the trees in the Arboretum have been thinned to make room for the remainder to grow well, with strong roots and branches to resist the winter storms. This has the added advantage of keeping the ground-flora interesting, particularly the Southern Marsh Orchids that grow near the beeches.

### Why we do it

With the wildlife affected by the weather, it is important to continue the careful, rotational clearing to keep the commons varied and interesting: the scale of each habitat (grassland, woodlands, wetlands and scrub) becomes vital, to "keep the numbers up" ... so that in poor years, enough individuals survive to build-up the populations again. Simple stuff – but so important in the long term.

### Thanks to you...

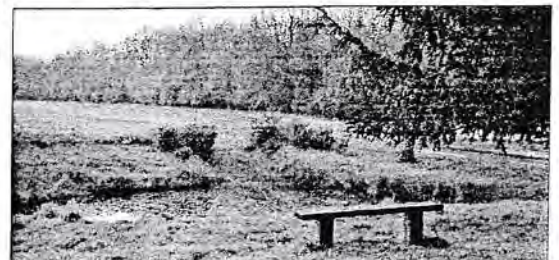
All of this work and the continued survival of Bookham Commons as a wonderful haven for people and wildlife, is due to your continued support! – thank you from myself, the National Trust and from future generations.

## 2009 Appeal – Help rescue the ponds!

The picturesque ponds at the Eastern end of Hollows Path have long been hidden from the public gaze...this was not always so and there are some very interesting old postcards with views of Upper and Lower Eastern Ponds in the 1920's. This was a time when the commons were much more extensively grazed by cattle, ponies and sheep. In recent years they have become somewhat secluded and were left as a refuge for wild duck – though they are now so silted-up that there is very little water or wildlife present...

With your generous help we shall be able to restore them to their former glory and enhance the landscape value of the commons. Money has been spent (along with the excellent support of Mole Valley District Council Environment Services Dept.) on dog-waste bins. This is a major (carefree!) step forward and will have immediate and lasting benefits for people (particularly children) and wildlife (especially, delicate wild flowers that need nutrient-poor, un-enriched soil). A contribution towards this very civilised and environment-friendly service would be greatly appreciated.

The track across the commons to the Mark Oak area has been completed and our thanks go to all who contributed. With the muddy sections surfaced, access to this part of the woodland has greatly improved.





# Guided Walks 2009

**PLEASE NOTE:** Here are the Guided Walks to be conducted on the Commons in the coming year. As places are limited, please book early to avoid disappointment by phoning **01372 220642**.  
£4 per adult, £2 per child

## Responsible Dog Walkers' Awareness Day

Wednesday March 18th  
9.00am – 3.00pm

(no charge for this event)

How to responsibly enjoy the countryside with your dog. Lots of help and advice from the National Trust Wardens, MVDC Dog Warden and other local charities. Just turn-up on the day!

## Song of the Nightingale

Wednesday May 6th  
7.30 – 9.30pm

Join the Warden to listen to the amazing song of Nightingales that have flown all the way from Tropical Africa to entertain us! (and breed!) Wellies if wet, please bring a torch.

Wednesday May 13th  
7.30 – 9.30pm

A follow-up walk for the disappointed/late applicants!

## Family Bike Ride

Sunday July 12th  
10.00am – 12 noon

A gentle cycle ride of the main tracks on the commons with Warden Ian Swinney taking-in points of interest along the way

## History Detectives

Sunday October 18th  
10.00am – 12noon

How did the commons look 50 years ago? Use old photographs and maps to trace the recent history of Bookham.

## Boxing Day Ramble

Saturday December 26th  
11.00am – 1.00pm

A "walk-off the Christmas Pud" stroll with Warden Ian Swinney.

All walks start from Tunnel Car Park (200 yards east of Bookham Railway Station) and last approximately 2 hours. Wellies or stout footwear recommended.

## Date for your Diary

Thursday 14th May – 7.00 for 7.30 pm prompt  
Cheese and Wine Supper at The Old Barn Hall, Great Bookham

## The Flowers of the Mediterranean

An illustrated talk by  
Dr Peter Brandham

Tickets – £10.00 each inclusive – obtainable from Granary Crafts, Church Road, or from Ron Smith, 01372 452361.

## Chairman's note ...

Firstly I'd like to express huge appreciation of the work our Treasurer Ron Smith has done over many years. Although staying on the committee he has handed over the job to Anne Peck whom we welcome with our warm good wishes.

I was pleased to hear from Ian of the placing of six oak benches made from oaks cut from the Commons. Surely a great benefit for many of us.

Each year we seem to be able to report progress on previous schemes but, as in all walks of life, there is always so much more to be done.

I am pleased to endorse this year's project to concentrate on the ponds. As Ian has pointed out, parts of the pond area have been neglected for a time and it would be wonderful to spend time bringing all the areas up to date and readily available for all to see. In these straightened times we would welcome your financial and physical help to enable us to continue saying – 'These are your Commons, enjoy them!'

You will see that we have included under the 'Subscription' heading the possibility for you to use a standing order if you wish and I hope this could be of help.

Thanks for all you have done and are doing and I hope to see you at our Cheese & Wine Supper on May 14th.

**Peter Corliss**



## Friends of Bookham Commons

Mrs Anne Peck (Treasurer), 8 Sole Farm Road, Great Bookham, Surrey KT23 3DJ

Subscriptions of £5 are now due. Please send your cheque with the form below to the Treasurer. I/We enclose a cheque for £5 Annual Subscription made out to *The Friends of Bookham Commons*.

Name .....

Address .....

Postcode ..... Telephone .....

### BANKERS STANDING ORDER

#### YOUR DETAILS

To the Manager ..... Bank plc Sort Code .....

Branch Address .....

Name ..... Account No. ....

#### RECIPIENTS DETAILS

To: The Manager, Lloyds TSB plc, 120-124 High Street, Dorking

Please pay to *The Friends of Bookham Commons* Sort Code 30-92-70 Account number 1273021

The sum of £ ..... (amount in words) ON ..... Annually

Signed ..... Date .....